

ANXIETY IN OSCAR WILDE'S *AN IDEAL HUSBAND* DRAMA (1895):

A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH



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by:

ARIS SETYONUGROHO

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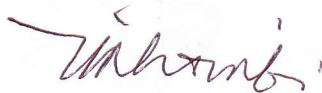
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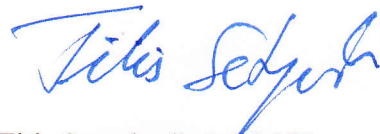
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A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

Aris Setyonugroho

A320080020

School of Teacher Training and Education

Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

Ariessetya88@ymail.com

ABSTRACT

The major problem of this study is how anxiety is reflected in Sir Robert Chiltern's personality. The aim of this study is to analyze Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband drama based on Psychoanalytic Perspective. This study focuses on the major characters, namely Sir Robert Chiltern. The method of data collection is qualitative method. This study uses two data sources, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the script of the play itself, while the secondary data source includes books and other data that have relationship with the research. Technique of the Data Collection is library research, while the technique of Data Analysis in this study is descriptive. Based on the psychological analysis, it is clear that in An Ideal Husband drama Oscar Wilde is demonstrating a psychological phenomenon, in which an individual is experiencing anxiety and making efforts for coping with the anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Sir Robert Chiltern, Psychoanalytic Approach.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is the feeling that appears inside of the personality when the feeling of being afraid is bigger than brave. It is also possible that anxiety occurs because the problem is too hard to solve. It happens because they feel that something will threaten them. This act can change people's personality. They will look rather different than usual. Having the feeling of anxiety motivates people to do something to free the external danger, to inhibit the instinctual impulse, or to obey the voice of conscience (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 42). Having the feeling of anxiety has purpose that they can feel safely or more calmly in facing the realities that make them feel anxious. The circumstances of life inevitably place the personality under strain, even though they have many resources for coping with their problem. Their motives are not easily satisfied because they must think again what way they have to choose to solve their problem. Furthermore, the way that they use to reduce their anxiety is only for a while. So, later they have to face their own problem. The way that helps people to reduce the tension is called defense mechanism.

According to Freud, *defense mechanism* is “mental process that has goal to reduce the anxiety and that shares two particular characteristics: they operate unconsciously and distort reality” (Hall and Lindzey, 1985:45). In other words, the use of ego defense mechanism can give the feeling of safety from being anxious. Freud said that *defense mechanism* is “a strategy used by the individual to defend against open expression of id impulses and posing super ego pressure”. (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1976:38). Here, the researcher wants to explore the anxiety and the ego defense mechanism on the major character's personality that shows in *An Ideal Husband*, a play, written by Oscar Wilde.

An Ideal Husband written in 1895 is one of Oscar Wilde's plays. It consists of four acts and 93 pages. The play has great settings, act I, the octagon room in Sir Robert Chiltern's house in Grosvenor square, act II, morning-room in Sir Robert Chiltern's house, act III, in the library of Lord Goring's house in Curzon street, and act IV same as act II (morning-room in Sir Robert Chiltern's House).

An Ideal Husband is a play which evolves around blackmail and political corruption, and touches on the themes of public and private honor. So, this study chooses anxiety as an issue and psychoanalytic perspective as the approach of the study.

The benefits of the study are divided into two parts. The first is theoretical benefit; this research will become a reference to study literature, especially drama analysis using psychoanalytic approach, this research can give a contribution to English learning. The second is practical benefit; this research gives a deep understanding for the writer himself about the play based on psychoanalytic approach.

The objectives of the study are to analyze the play based on its structural elements and to analyze the play based on the psychoanalytic approach.

Psychoanalysis is the branch of psychological study that focuses on the personality of human being. According to Freud, "Psychoanalysis reflects to the changing value in the society and it plays a role in the changing of values" (Pervin, 1984:21). Furthermore, psychoanalysis exemplifies a psychodynamic theory that gives a prominent role to the complex interplay among forces in human behavior.

Theory of psychoanalysis views that mental process of individual has three systems, namely the id, ego and superego. Freud maintained that *id, ego and superego* "are not persons, places, or physical things they are the names given to certain motivational forces whose existence is inferred from the way people behave" (Feist, 1985: 24).

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data sources are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the drama using a psychoanalytic approach. The steps to conduct this research are determining the type of study, determining the object of the study, determining

the data and data source, determining technique of data collection, and determining technique of data analysis.

The object of the study is *An Ideal Husband* Drama written by Oscar Wilde in 1895. The drama consists of 93 pages, and 4 acts. It is analyzed by using a psychoanalytic approach.

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research. The primary data source, the primary data source is *An Ideal Husband* drama by Oscar Wilde. It covers such thing as words, phrase, sentence, and dialogue in the drama. The second data source are taken from other sources related to primary data such as the author biography, some books of psychoanalysis criticism, references from internet related to *An Ideal Husband* Drama.

The technique of data collection is library research, the steps are: reading the drama repeatedly, taking some important notes, categorizing the data, rejecting the data that is not relevant to support the study.

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the analysis elements of the novel and a psychoanalytic approach.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Oscar Wilde in *An Ideal Husband* drama generally suggests that the feeling of anxiety can drive people to do something that will harm themselves and other people.

1. Structure of Personality

a. *Id*

Freud states, *id* is “the most basic system of personality where the innate instinct exists” (Burger, 1986:56). It is based on pleasure principle.

Sir Robert Chiltern’s first *id* begins when he wants to get much money and to consider that the wealth is everything.

Sir Robert Chiltern

Every man of ambition has to fight his century with its own weapons. What this century worships is wealth. The God of this century is wealth. To succeed one must have wealth. At all costs one must have wealth.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 32-33).

The second *id* comes when he wants to be a rich man because when he was still young he was poor. He has an ambition to success.

Sir Robert Chiltern

When I was old, perhaps. When I had lost my passion for power, or could not use it. When I was tired, worn out, disappointed. I wanted my success when I was young. Youth is the time for success. I couldn't wait.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 33).

The third *id* comes again when he wants to sell a state secret to Baron Arnheim in early his public career.

Sir Robert Chiltern

I received from the Baron 110,000 pounds.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 35).

The fourth *id* comes when he is influenced statement from Baron. He wants to give information to Baron Arnheim in other than getting the money from him.

Sir Robert Chiltern's biggest *id* when Mrs. Cheveley blackmails him. So, Sir Robert Chiltern wants to fight Mrs. Cheveley.

Sir Robert Chiltern

I will fight her to the death, as long as my wife knows nothing.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 38).

b. Superego

According to Freud, *superego* is "the moral or ethical province of personality" (Feist, 1985:26). It is based on idealistic principle.

Sir Robert Chiltern's first *superego* happens when he wants to get much money and to consider that the wealth is everything. But, he feels that he is getting the money from his hard work and he is also to get successfulness.

Sir Robert Chiltern

[Excitedly.] I did not sell myself for money. I bought success at a great price. That is all.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 33).

The second *superego* occurs when Sir Robert Chiltern wants to be a rich man because when he was still young he was poor. He only feels that adolescence used him to achieve happiness and successfulness. Sir Robert Chiltern feels that he can not delay his success.

Sir Robert Chiltern

When I was old, perhaps. When I had lost my passion for power, or could not use it. When I was tired, worn out, disappointed. I wanted

my success when I was young. Youth is the time for success. I couldn't wait.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 33).

The third *superego* occurs when Sir Robert Chiltern wants to sell a state secret to Baron Arnheim in early his public career. But, he has to regret his behavior and he has to apologize to his wife (Lady Chiltern).

Sir Robert Chiltern

(*Biting his lip*). I was mistaken in the view I took. We all may make mistakes.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 27).

The forth *superego* occurs when he wants to give information to Baron Arnheim in other than getting the money from him. He feels that Baron has to influence him with good flattery. So, Sir Robert Chiltern gives information to him.

Sir Robert Chiltern's biggest *superego* when Mrs. Cheveley blackmails him. So, Sir Robert Chiltern wants to fight Mrs. Cheveley. But, Sir Robert Chiltern can not fight her and he does not know how to fight Mrs. Cheveley. So, He asks Lord Goring to help him.

Sir Robert Chiltern

I couldn't do it. It would kill her love for me. And now about this woman, this Mrs. Cheveley. How can I defend myself against her? You knew her before, Arthur, apparently.

(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 36).

c. *Ego*

According to Freud, *ego* is "the result of the creation of spiritual inner systems as the result of reciprocal relationship between an individual and his world" (Hall and Lindzey, 1985:34). Freud declares that the ego's actions are based on the reality principle.

Sir Robert Chiltern's first *ego* happens when he wants to get much money by selling a state secret and to consider that the wealth is everything. But, he feels that he is getting the money from his hard work and he is also to get successfulness from his hard work. But, Sir Robert Chiltern is getting much money by selling a state secret.

Sir Robert Chiltern

Weak? Oh, I am sick of hearing that phrase. Sick of using it about others. Weak? Do you really think, Arthur, that it is weakness that

yields to temptation? I tell you that there are terrible temptations that it requires strength, strength and courage, to yield to. To stake all one's life on a single moment, to risk everything on one throw, whether the stake be power or pleasure, I care not there is no weakness in that. There is a horrible, a terrible courage. I had that courage. I sat down the same afternoon and wrote Baron Arnheim the letter this woman now holds. He made three-quarters of a million over the transaction.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 34-35).

The second *ego* occurs when Sir Robert Chiltern wants to be a rich man because when he was still young he was poor. He feels that adolescence used him to achieve happiness and successfulness. Sir Robert Chiltern feels that he can not delay his success. So, Sir Robert Chiltern can not restrain his ambition that he wants to be a rich man when he is still young. So, that it does not matter that he comes from a good family because his prospects are limited by a lack of funds.

Sir Robert Chiltern
[Pacing up and down the room.] Arthur, do you think that what I did nearly eighteen years ago should be brought up against me now? Do you think it fair that a man's whole career should be ruined for a fault done in one's boyhood almost? I was twenty-two at the time, and I had the double misfortune of being well-born and poor, two unforgiveable things nowadays. Is it fair that the folly, the sin of one's youth, if men choose to call it a sin, should wreck a life like mine, should place me in the pillory, should shatter all that I have worked for, all that I have built up. Is it fair, Arthur?
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 32).

The third *ego* happens when Sir Robert Chiltern wants to sell state secrets to Baron Arnheim in early his public career. But, he has to regret his behavior and he has to apologize to his wife (Lady Chiltern). Besides that, Sir Robert feels guilty to his wife. Sir Robert Chiltern realizes that what he does ugly and very grave: he sells a state secret for money.

Sir Robert Chiltern
(Biting his lip). I was mistaken in the view I took. We all may make mistakes.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 27).

The fourth *ego* occurs when he wants to give information to Baron Arnheim in other than getting the money from him. He feels that Baron has to influence him with good flattery. So, Sir Robert Chiltern gives information to him. Sir Robert Chiltern tells how he is seduced by the teachings of Baron Arnheim, who turn his head.

Sir Robert Chiltern's biggest *ego* when Mrs. Cheveley blackmails him. So, Sir Robert Chiltern wants to fight Mrs. Cheveley. But, Sir Robert Chiltern can not fight her and he does not know how to fight Mrs. Cheveley. Sir Robert Chiltern asks Lord Goring to help him. So, Sir Robert Chiltern meets Lord Goring then they are speaking. Finally, Lord Goring helps Sir Robert Chiltern to destroy blackmails Mrs. Cheveley scheme.

Sir Robert Chiltern

Thank you, Arthur, thank you. But what is to be done? What can be done?

(An Ideal Husband, Act II, Pg 35).

d. Type of Personality

From the analysis of Sir Robert Chiltern's personality above, the researcher can make a conclusion that Sir Robert Chiltern is included in guilty ridden type. His superego is bigger than his id and ego. For Sir Robert Chiltern, his career and family is more important than everything. He feels guilty because he sells a state secret to Baron Arnheim for money.

2. Anxieties of Sir Robert Chiltern's

The kind of anxieties that Sir Robert Chiltern encounters depend on which energy of the *id* or *superego* dominating the *ego* is greater than others. The anxieties include moral anxiety, neurotic anxiety and reality anxiety. According to Freud, *anxiety* is "repetition of the earlier traumatic experience" (Pervin, 1984:80).

a. Neurotic Anxiety

Neurotic anxiety deals with someone's personal feeling. According to Freud, *neurotic anxiety* is "the fear that the instincts will get out of control and cause the person to do something for which he or she will be punished" (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992:103). Neurotic anxiety occurs because ego cannot control the instinct coming from id.

Neurotic anxiety happens when Sir Robert Chiltern meets Mrs. Cheveley in the party. Mrs. Cheveley has come to the party to speak to Sir Robert specifically. Sir Robert Chiltern feels afraid if Mrs. Cheveley to

talk about his mistake in the past. It is showing when he feels afraid that something may come because he is not ready to face that.

Sir Robert Chiltern
I am *afraid* I don't quite understand what you mean.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 20).

b. Reality Anxiety

According to Freud, *reality anxiety* is “a feeling experience as the result of the detection of the danger coming from the outer world” (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992:103).

Reality anxiety happens when Sir Robert Chiltern appears the blackmails from Mrs. Cheveley. If Sir Robert does not support what is in fact a doomed South American canal scheme in a speech to the parliament the next day, she will reveal the terrible secret of his youth, which will destroy his life and career.

Sir Robert Chiltern
I *fear* I have no advice to give you, Mrs. Cheveley, except to interest yourself in something less dangerous. The success of the Canal depends, of course, on the attitude of England, and I am going to lay the report of the Commissioners before the House to-morrow night.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 19).

c. Moral Anxiety

According to Freud, *moral anxiety* is “the fear of the conscience” (Hall and Lindzey, 1985:42). People will feel guilty when they do something that is contrary to the moral code. It occurs when the ego is threatened by punishment from the superego and because the individual really has a moral consciousness.

Moral anxiety happens when Sir Robert Chiltern tells the past mistake to Lady Chiltern. Sir Robert Chiltern sells a state secret to Baron Arnheim in early his public career. Sir Robert feels guilty to his wife. Sir Robert Chiltern realizes that what he does ugly and very grave: he sells a state secret for money.

Sir Robert Chiltern
(*Biting his lip*). I was mistaken in the view I took. We all may make mistakes.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 27).

3. Defense Mechanism of Sir Robert Chiltern's Anxiety

a. Repression

According to Freud conceptualized that *repression* as “an attempt by the *ego* to keep undesirable *id* impulses from reaching consciousness” (Ryckman, 1985:34). Chiltern uses it by making a party. The Chilterns are hosting a reception party to reduce his anxiety from the feeling of guilty.

The first scene tells about Chiltern, an under-secretary for Foreign Affairs who make a reception party. Actually, he feels guilty of the crime that he is doing a mistake in the past. Sir Robert Chiltern also feels anxious when he realizes that his disreputable past, blackmailed, and finally saved from any public scandal.

The octagon room at Sir Robert Chiltern’s house in Grosvenor Square.

[The room is brilliantly lighted and full of guests. At the top of the staircase stands LADY CHILTERN, a woman of grave Greek beauty, about twenty-seven years of age. She receives the guests as they come up]

(An Ideal Husband, Act I, Pg 4).

Sir Robert Chiltern

(Biting his lip). I was mistaken in the view I took. We all may make mistakes.

(An Ideal Husband, Act I, Pg 27).

b. Suppression

According to Freud, *the suppression* is “the conscious blocking of unpleasant matters from awareness” (Ryckman, 1985:34). Sir Robert Chiltern’ suppression is resulted from the ego defense from holding in pulse privately and denied the public. It means by using suppression, people can reduce his feeling of anxious for himself; it also gives an advantage for them to cover their anxiety from the society. Sir Robert Chiltern’ suppression is the result of his *id*’s pressure on *ego* and it makes Sir Robert Chiltern feel worried that it will drive his *ego* to do something that harms him.

Sir Robert Chiltern’ first suppression occurs when he has a scandal. He realizes that he has a crime that he is doing in the past by selling a state secret. He pressures his mistake by living normally and acts as if there are no mistake and crime that has happened.

Sir Robert Chiltern

[Excitedly.] I did not sell myself for money. I bought success at a great price. That is all.

(An Ideal Husband, Act II, Pg 33).

c. Denial

Denial is “a person’s refusal to perceive an unpleasant event in external reality” (Rykman, 1985:35). It occurs when individual cannot tolerate sadness of the reality.

Sir Robert Chiltern’ denial begins when Lord Goring asks him about the scandal. He feels shocked of Lord Goring’s question because he feels that this question will lead him into the ruin. Then he answers for Lord Goring to deny the crime that he ever does. He tells Lord Goring that his scandal is caused by a poor. Chiltern tries to explain, saying that when he was still young he was poor, so that it does not matter that he comes from a good family because his prospects were limited by a lack of funds.

Sir Robert Chiltern

[Pacing up and down the room.] Arthur, do you think that what I did nearly eighteen years ago should be brought up against me now? Do you think it fair that a man’s whole career should be ruined for a fault done in one’s boyhood almost? I was twenty-two at the time, and I had the double misfortune of being well-born and poor, two unforgiveable things nowadays. Is it fair that the folly, the sin of one’s youth, if men choose to call it a sin, should wreck a life like mine, should place me in the pillory, should shatter all that I have worked for, all that I have built up. Is it fair, Arthur?

(An Ideal Husband, Act II, Pg 32).

d. Reaction Formation

According to Freud, *reaction formation* which involves “in an undesirable impulse into its opposite, as a lower form of sublimation” (Rykman, 1985:36). Typically, reaction formation masks negative feeling with positive one.

Sir Robert Chiltern meets his reaction formation when he faces the fact that his wife (Lady Chiltern) is mad. He believes that the madness of his wife is caused by Mrs. Cheveley. Actually, Sir Robert Chiltern feels anxious when Lady Chiltern has to know his affair. It seems that Lady Chiltern knows their affair when she is talking about her husband with Mrs. Chevely and the crime that Sir Robert Chiltern does in the past. To

reduce his anxiety, Sir Robert Chiltern uses reaction formation to mask his negative feeling that maybe his wife just does not like with Mrs. Cheveley.

Lady Chiltern

That woman who has just gone out, Mrs. Cheveley, as she calls herself now. She seemed to taunt me with it. Robert, I know this woman. You don't. We were at school together. She was untruthful, dishonest, an evil influence on every one whose trust or friendship she could win. I hated, I despised her. She stole things, she was a thief. She was sent away for being a thief. Why do you let her influence you?

(An Ideal Husband, Act I, Pg 27).

e. Projection

One unconscious mechanism that protects us from acknowledgement was called projection. According to Freud, *projection* is “a type of defense mechanism by which neurotic or moral anxiety is converted into an objective fear” (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1976:40). The person distorts his or her fear into other people. Person uses projection to express his impulses in defending himself against his enemies.

Sir Robert Chiltern uses this mechanism when he realizes that he has influenced by Baron Arnheim. Moreover, when Baron Arnheim talks about a project and if Sir Robert Chiltern gives information to Baron Arnheim, he will become a rich man. Then Sir Robert Chiltern blames him because his influence.

Sir Robert Chiltern

When I was going away he said to me that if I ever could give him any private information of real value he would make me a very rich man. I was dazed at the prospect he held out to me, and my ambition and my desire for power were at that time boundless. Six weeks later certain private documents passed through my hands.

(An Ideal Husband, Act II, Pg 34).

f. Compensation

The person may attempt to overcome the feelings inferiority and related anxiety by devoting additional efforts to area of the inferiority called compensation.

Sir Robert Chiltern is always calm down as a compensation for his inferiority. He believes in himself that he is inferior in his performance. He thinks that his face is always in anxiety. Then he tries to cover his anxiety

of being anxious and guilty by calm down and to consider there are no mistake and crime that has happened.

Sir Robert Chiltern
[Excitedly.] I did not sell myself for money. I bought success at a great price. That is all.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act II, Pg 33).

g. Rationalization

According to Freud, *rationalization* is “the justification of behavior through the use of plausible, but inaccurate, excuses” (Ryckman, 1985:36). It is a good reason for someone who has the feeling of anxiety by claiming that an unpleasant experience is exactly what he or she wanted. It is a good reason for Sir Robert Chiltern to overcome his anxiety. He uses this mechanism when he gives a reason to his wife (Lady Chiltern) about the event of his past.

Sir Robert Chiltern
Gertrude, what you tell me may be true, but it happened many years ago. It is best forgotten! Mrs. Cheveley may have changed since then. No one should be entirely judged by their past.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 27).

h. Isolation

Isolation is the way for people to reduce their anxiety by isolating the events in their minds. Sir Robert Chiltern’ isolation occurs all the time. He uses it by trying to forget his past, especially about the crime that he is doing. He hid past mistake to his wife in other to that his wife will not ask him about the past.

Sir Robert Chiltern
Gertrude, there is nothing in my past life that you might not know.
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 29).

i. Intellectualization

According to Freud, the process of intellectualization allows “individuals to protect themselves against unbearable pain”. (Ryckman, 1985:36). It involves dissociation between one’s thoughts and feelings.

Sir Robert Chiltern uses intellectualization to overcome his anxiety when finally he feels guilty by selling a state secret. He realizes that he does a mistake that makes his wife get mad. Then he wishes that his wife still love him and forgive him.

Sir Robert Chiltern
Oh, love me always, Gertrude, love me always!
(*An Ideal Husband*, Act I, Pg 30)

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

Based on the psychoanalytic analysis, it is evident that in this drama, Oscar Wilde is demonstrating a psychological phenomenon in which an individual is experiencing anxiety and making efforts for coping with the anxiety. By using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalytic the researcher analyzes the personality of Sir Robert Chiltern. Sir Robert Chiltern as the major character in this play is loyal, clever, and intelligent politician. He is also corrupt, so his past mistake makes anxious and guilty. Sir Robert Chiltern gives the highest priority for their *superego*. By means of this drama, Oscar Wilde wants to convey a message that the feeling of anxiety can drive people to do something that will harm for himself and other people.

Related to this study above, this study is hoped can give pedagogical implication such as:

1. This study is hoped to give contribution in developing literature aspect in English education.
2. This study is hoped can be a new reference study in of literature.

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